

SMEC

The below case study was provided for Consult Australia's [Striving for mentally healthy workplaces](#) report.

Case study : SMEC's approach to addressing mental health in the workplace

The SMEC Executive Committee are champions of health and safety including the mental wellbeing of employees. Over the last couple of years, there has been an increased focus on creating a constructive culture that makes a genuine difference to our workplace and how we interact. Part of this focus includes mental wellness which is part of our overall health and wellbeing approach.

Intervention and Implementation

SMEC's focus has been on promoting the awareness of Mental Health in the workplace. The business has focused on:

1. Annual sponsorship of wellbeing events such as R U OK? Day across SMEC offices nationally.
2. Providing easy access and confidential EAP services to all employees and their family members through our third-party provider, Benestar.
3. Collaborating with Mental Health accredited organisations such as Beyondblue and BUPA on facilitating workshops and training.
4. Empowering our Leadership Development Program participants to create a Mental Health Strategy for the business.
5. Promoting a positive work culture emphasising on constructive and positive behaviours.

Sponsorship of Wellbeing Events

SMEC annually sponsors R U OK? Day across our major offices. SMEC has capitalised on the day to inspire meaningful connectedness amongst staff by enabling the importance of senior leaders speaking at the event in different offices, staff share personal stories, public figures such as sports stars have previously participated by sharing their story to break down the stigma and normalise mental health.

Employee Assistance Program

SMEC's EAP is designed to improve the wellbeing and lifestyle of employees who may be affected by personal or work-related challenges including mental health issues. There is a common awareness of how to access this program as it is advertised on our intranet page, in common areas of the workplace, and managers frequently offer this service to employees.

Workshops

SMEC has provided access to mental health training for staff through accredited organisations such as Beyondblue and BUPA. These workshops have included:

- i. Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace – Awareness and Strategies for Managers. The people and culture team were the pilot team who attended this workshop (run by Beyondblue in conjunction with SMEC's EAP provider Benestar) in 2017 to:
 - a) Increase their knowledge and awareness about anxiety, depression and suicide,
 - b) Understand the principles and strategies that facilitate the creation of a mentally healthy workplace,
 - c) Enable how to have a conversation with someone of concern,
 - d) Build confidence in how to support an employee who is experiencing or recovering from a mental health condition.
- ii. Open Minds - Mental Health Basics Seminar. As part of SMECs annual Health and Wellbeing calendar, this Lunch and Learn seminar was run by BUPA for employees exploring
 - a) The meaning of mental health and mental illness,

- b) How circumstances, work practices and lifestyle habits can have an impact on mental health,
 - c) How mental health conditions like anxiety, and depression can affect people at work,
 - d) Practical strategies for seeking help and getting back on track,
 - e) Getting Through the Festive Period.
- iii. Mental Health First Aid training. A couple of first aid officers in one of our smaller offices attended this one-day course to increase their awareness on mental health. The course focused on awareness, recognising signs and symptoms of mental health, conversation starters and how to get support. This workshop was run by St John of God.

Mental Health Strategy

We have incorporated mental health into our Leadership Development Program by empowering participants of the program to contribute to the design of a Mental Health Strategy for the ANZ business. This strategy will detail proposed activities that the business can focus on to enhance a positive culture of mental wellness, enable awareness and support of colleagues experiencing mental health as part of our overall health and wellbeing strategy.

Conclusion

Mental Health is currently incorporated into our overall Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The focus is on prevention, awareness and support. We are continuing to explore other ways and avenues of creating a healthier and happier workplace.